



UPDATE

March 2017

Circuit 26/4,
Southampton District

NEXT Circuit Gathering will include a “musical from scratch”; **Saturday May 20th**. Would you like to sing or play an instrument? See the poster for more information.

Methodists, Evangelicals Together (MET)

I was blessed to have spent the weekend with nine amazing and wonderful friends from Basingstoke and many other Methodists who came to attend the MET Conference in Torquay.

Apart from some transport and plumbing issues (all will be revealed!) everything went very smoothly and we all shared a very inspiring and enjoyable experience. The hotel staff were very welcoming, the rooms very comfortable and the food plentiful.

The speaker this year was Rev Dr Martin Turner who held us captive with his in depth and enlightening talks from the book of Ruth. Martin took this ancient story and made it relevant for today. His first talk on Saturday made me feel that I was the only person in the room and he knew about the difficulties that I had faced.

It became apparent that Ruth was a strong, loyal and able woman whose love, integrity and determination, secured her the love of a man named Boaz. He was a decent man who cared for Ruth and respected her, these characteristics were rare in the time of the story. Ruth and Boaz's story was of love and Martin encouraged us to think of our own love story with Jesus Christ.

We listened to talks from other speakers who encouraged us to keep the light of Jesus shining, not just on Sundays but throughout the week. To be considerate to others, to offer help and companionship if needed. This was described as being a "game changer", the biggest game changer of all being Jesus himself. As Christians, we should point people to Jesus and to the Kingdom of God.

Carol Phillips – Steward St Andrews

But what about the plumbing?

Read on

A different view of the Methodist Evangelicals Together (MET) conference held over the last weekend of January 2017.

With legs akimbo Rosemary struggled to get into the back seat. She is not the most graceful of creatures, but clambering over seats really tested her humour. Once laughter had subsided we set off though the English countryside past Stonehenge, which will look nice once they put the roof on and the double glazing in!

Our hotel was lovely and the staff so helpful; as in the case of Kim who found the tap came off in her hand and five men came to her room.

Our speaker was Rev. Martin Turner who spoke on the book of Ruth. He has a wonderful gift to bring the story to life. He filled in the background to the story. He spoke of the low status of women, of a patriarchal society and drew parallels to our own time concerning the long struggle for women to be ordained in the Church of England and how some Churches still ban women priests. It was a society in which land mattered more than women, read Ruth for yourselves.

It was a weekend of great joy and blessing and humour also. Rosemary still cant get in to a car gracefully!

Rosemary Prior (St Andrews) – First timer at the conference.

..... Creating Safer Space Training Sessions

The Circuit Safeguarding Training Team are providing Creating Safer Space Sessions as follows:

Refresher Sessions - for those who completed Creating Safer Space Training 4-5 years ago

- Monday 20th March @ St Andrew's Methodist Church, starting at 2.00p.m.
- Saturday 22nd April @ Mortimer Methodist Church, starting at 10.00a.m.

Foundation Training Session- for those who have **not** previously undertaken any Methodist Church Safeguarding training

- Saturday 8th July @ Tadley Common Methodist Church, starting at 10.00a.m.

Places for all these sessions are limited. To book a place contact Marion in the Circuit Office Marion@BasingstokeReadingMethodists.uk Tel. 0118 958 1505 This is to ensure there are sufficient resources available.

Retreat day at Ebenezer Retreat Centre, Silchester Methodist Church, 23rd Jan, 2017: our reflections!

Carol and I arrived shortly after 10.00 a.m. at this lovely rural setting on the Hampshire/Berkshire border. Initially I drove straight past it as we only spotted the church at the last moment, so had to retrace our steps! We were touched by the friendly atmosphere and after an hour-long journey, welcomed the tea/coffee and biscuits on offer at any time of the day.

We were shown around the Ebenezer garden, by Lesley (with Carol) and Brian (with Peter) but did not use the external focal points due to the prevailing cold weather. Clearly a great deal of work had been undertaken to improve the garden since we previously visited the site some years ago.

Carol enjoyed the art work/collage linked to some of the patterns from the garden – photographs were displayed to give some ideas. Brian and I went for a walk on the heathland for a good **chat!** Very peaceful: birds, aircraft trails in a blue sky and on the ground, dog walkers, rambles and cyclists.

Lunchtime was composed of delicious home-made soups, tea, coffee and yoghurts! In the afternoon, we both had letters purporting to be from God, confirming His profound love for us and his awareness of our deepest secrets and fears.

Lesley then produced a pack of cards – “The Jesus Deck”- we could take three cards, ponder on the scriptural verses and answer Lesley’s question as to how those verses impacted on our Christian life. I couldn’t think of anything specific initially other than to admit that prayer was difficult on many occasions as my mind so quickly wandered. I confessed that the prostate cancer treatment I was receiving made me weary, but I hadn’t even told Carol that one day last year, I sat on our stairs at home and simply wept: I wanted to be free of the burden of ill-health, but realized I could do nothing in my own strength to overcome the cancer, only God could do that. Lesley and Ruth prayed over me, linking hands with Carol; it was an uplifting experience, one which I will not forget.

Worship in the church itself took place at the end of the afternoon: and some people shared their deeper spiritual aims and needs – a quiet day which promoted mutual trust and ended in prayer.

Peter and Carol Griffin

Well done Allan Crisp – he reached the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro!

Retreat – 4th March

I wonder what you think of when you hear the word retreat. Do you automatically recoil in horror as retreat is not for you. You are a talkative person and could never keep quite. Or perhaps you are scared of the quietness because then God could speak to you and you might not like what he says. These are all natural reactions if you have never been to a retreat but don’t let it stop you.

I spent a wonderful day at Silchester last Saturday which was led by Rev Dr Ruth Midcalf and Angela Hiscock. The theme was God so loved the World based on John 3 v 16. On arriving we were greeted by coffee/tea and biscuits and then went into the Church for opening devotions. Ruth led this part with help from Angela and we watched some powerful and thought provoking video clips.

We were then free to do what we wanted: go for a walk, do some craft, colouring or stay in the Church to be quiet or go into the Ebenezer Garden. There was a quiet space where you could light a candle and remember the love that Jesus shed for us on the cross. There was no pressure to do anything.

We all came together for lunch which consisted of lovely home-made soup (on a par with the Mug and Biscuit!). After lunch we were free to do as we wished coming together at 3.00pm for our final act of worship. The opportunity was given to share with each other any thoughts or experiences we had gained from the day. Again there was no pressure to participate. We finished off by lighting heart shaped candles and sharing the grace together.

I have been to these retreats before and find them a wonderful time to let go and relax. The atmosphere is tranquil and quiet and you have the opportunity to meet and make new friends. Silchester has produced 6 different walks which you can do. In the summer it will be lovely to do some of these walks when hopefully it will not be so muddy.

The next Retreat Day is Saturday 13 May and the theme will be “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done”. John 4 v 29
Led by Angela Hiscock and Rev Lesley Martin
See you there. Linda – St Andrews

Diary date; Circuit Prayer Day and Walk at Silchester Saturday September 2nd.